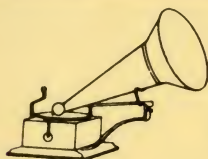


Hillandale



Journal of the
City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

October 1985 No. 146

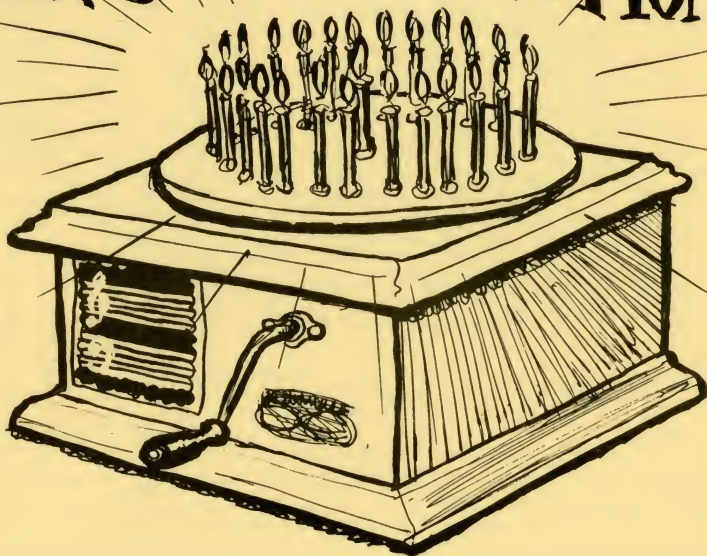
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OCTOBER

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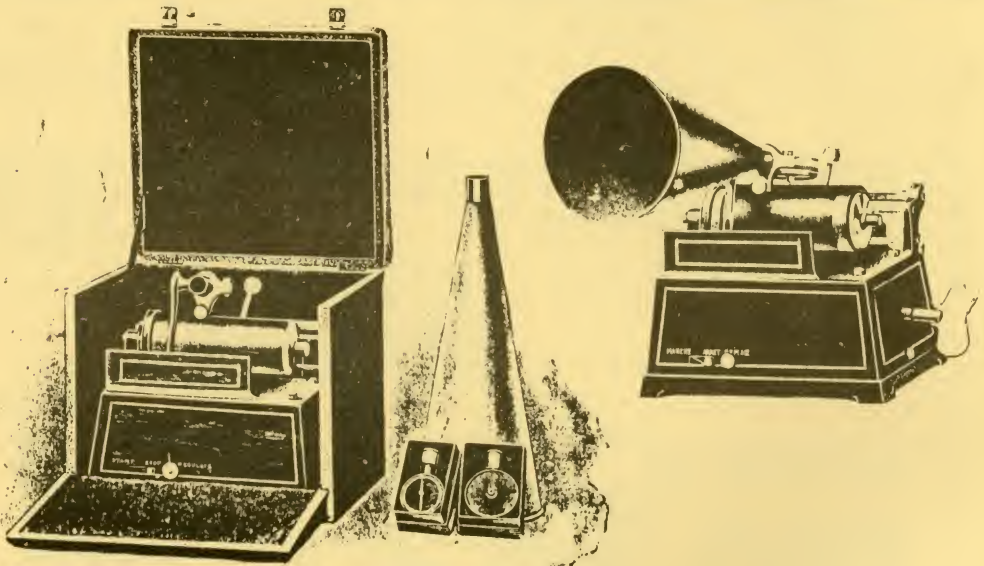
1985



Edchat

The HILLANDALE NEWS is twenty-five years old this month, and I had an idea at one time of a bumper issue to mark the occasion. Alas, pressure of work, and addition to the family and a shortage of appropriate contributions from members have all conspired against this, but the quarter century is noted by a specially drawn cover, two pieces recalling 1960 from the President and the Chairman and an article from each of the three decades represented in the Hillandale so far. These have been selected to cover cylinders, discs, machines and Society activities, incorporating also a reminder of a leading member and friend who is sadly no longer with us, and I hope that the trio will sum up what HILLANDALE is all about.

More recent news: at the A.G.M. in Oldbury, Ted Cunningham was elected Chairman, and Peter Martland Vice-Chairman. We welcome them to their new posts (if a chair can be a post) and wish them every success in leading the Society's activities. Tom Stephenson joins the Committee, as does the Editor (now shorn of other rank), and that reminds me, please keep writing letters and articles for the magazine, I'm running short again!



THE IMPERIAL, in Lined Case complete . £3 : 3 : 0

This thinly-disguised Pathe Gaulois appeared in an Edison Bell 'Fin-de-Siecle' catalogue of 1899/1900. Perhaps James Hough had not heard about Mary Tudor and Calais. In one view, the artist has translated the instructions over the stop/start lever, but the other still says 'Marche' and 'Arret'.

(See article on Page 276)

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

Official Journal of the City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society
(founded 1919)

EDITOR: Christopher Proudfoot, [REDACTED]

DISTRIBUTION: D.R.Roberts, [REDACTED]

SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY

by Ted Cunningham

Although the highlight of October 1960 was undoubtedly the appearance of a remarkable new periodical entitled "THE HILLANDALE NEWS", it is interesting to recall the other events which were occupying the world in that month.

John F. Kennedy and Leonid Brezhnev became Presidents of (respectively) the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. British Transport Minister Ernest Marples introduced Parking Meters and Traffic Wardens, and also M.O.T. tests, but only for ten-year-old cars. In London the Mermaid Theatre presented a play by one G.Frow entitled "Mr. Burke M.P." Albert Finney starred simultaneously in the play "Billy Liar" and the film "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning". On television we were watching Anthony Newley in "Gurney Slade", Harry Worth in "Here's Harry", Patrick McGeehan in "Danger Man", and sundry foolish people in "Candid Camera". Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister, R.A.Butler was Home Secretary, and Harold Wilson was contending with Hugh Gaitskell for leadership of the Labour Party.

During the year 1960 we first heard (a) Benjamin Britten's opera "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; (b) William Walton's Second Symphony, and (c) Joan Sutherland, despite laryngitis, croaking her way magnificently through "La Sonnambula" at Covent Garden. Robert Bolt's "A Man for all Seasons" was on the London stage, as was Harold Pinter's "The Caretaker" and Terence Rattigan's "Ross". New films included Hitchcock's "Psycho" and Lionel Bart's "Fings ain't what they used to be"; also "The Millionairess" with Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren, and "The Entertainer" with Laurence Olivier. John Betjeman's book "Summoned by Bells" was happily spared the scandalised frisson and legal thingummy-jig which greeted Penguin's unexpurgated "Lady Chatterley's Lover". The BBC Television Centre, designed by Norman and Dawbarn, opened at the White City, while the new American Embassy, designed by Eero Saarinen, opened in Grosvenor Square. Doctor Barbara Moore walked from John o'Groats to Lands End, presumably not in the stiletto heels then madly fashionable among the ladies. In Rome the 17th Olympic Games took place; in Rhodesia the Kariba Dam was opened; in Agadir there was an appalling earthquake; and in Sheffield the last British tram took its last official journey.

What else? Oh, yes. Princess Margaret married Mr. Antony Armstrong-Jones, and the farthing ceased to be legal tender.

THE PRESIDENT RECALLS

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for reminding us that this magazine reaches its Silver Jubilee this month. Time passes at the gallop these days, but there are several of us who can remember

the first appearance of Hillandale News in 1960, at the October meeting. It had been entirely unannounced and a pleasant surprise to all of us not in the know. So few were its early contributors that they had to resort to nommes-de-plume such as Robin Ellis (Bob Wormald), M.E.Nace (Roy Smith) and Tyn-Phoil (Gerry Annand). As far as I can recall, the Society's annual subscription was still five shillings (25 pence) and for twelve meetings and six magazines a year, this was good value.

There were feelings among a few that the magazine's name might be criticized for its spelling liberty, but as no one could think of anything better that said so much so succinctly, it was not further queried.

Bob Wormald suffered from a weak chest and as this worsened he went into hospital and Ernie Bayly assumed the Editorship officially by Issue No. 13 in mid-1963, although it appears that he was helping before that issue. The early numbers were duplicated by Russell Barnes in Bournemouth.

In those days the Society was compact and centred around London, although there were members round Britain and a very strong representation in Essex. Bob Wormald was, I think, both Secretary and Treasurer, and the Editor, and the Annual General Meeting occupied all of ten minutes before somebody's evening recital. Most of the A.G.M. was taken up by the spreading of the next year's programme dates among those present. These were nearly always Edison cylinder evenings, but the occasional 78 disc programme was tolerated from newcomers to the Society who had yet to acquire a range of cylinders. Edison discs appeared once or twice a year, and the entertainment, rather than historic interest was stressed; the membership then was not really interested in recitals of early or non-standard cylinders, and the ownership of more than one basic need of machines was frowned on by the old-timers, who relied on one or two well-tuned phonograph, almost always an Edison.

George Frow

CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

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|-----------------|---|
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| VICE-PRESIDENT: | A.D.Besford |
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| Victoria, Australia | C.Gracie, [REDACTED] |

Vitaphone

Part 2: THE FIRST PROGRAMMES

by G.W.Taylor

The first article (Hillandale 144) described the events leading to the establishment of the Vitaphone sound-on-disc system for the cinema, and gave some technical details. This article is concerned with the contents of the first Vitaphone programmes, their critical reception, and some general remarks on the Vitaphone short films themselves.

Having taken the plunge into sound films, Warners wanted an early return on their investment. Commercial production facilities had been established in New York by early 1926. Work on the first Vitaphone programme started in late April, and was completed in only three months, by 1 August. Three days later, a preview was presented to all those who had been involved in its production (and no doubt as a rehearsal for the all-important public presentation). On August 5, there was a special showing for the top brass of Western Electric and Bell Telephone. Everyone was impressed - not surprisingly, perhaps!

The first public performance of Vitaphone was on 6 August 1926, at the Warner Theater on Broadway in New York. The programme consisted of an hour of short films followed by a feature film, "Don Juan", with synchronised music and sound effects. The programme was as follows:

1. Speech by Will Hays, President of the Motion Picture Producers' Association.
2. Overture to "Tannhauser", New York Philharmonic Orchestra.
3. Humoresque (Dvorak), played by Mischa Elman (violin) and Joseph Bonime (piano)
4. Caro Nome (Rigoletto), sung by Marion Talley.
5. Roy Smeck (banjo, ukelele, harmonica and guitar).
6. Vesti la giubba (Pagliacci) sung by Giovanni Martinelli.
7. Variation movement from the 'Kreutzer' Sonata (Beethoven) played by Efreim Zimbalist (violin) and Harold Bauer (piano).
8. La Fiesta sung by Anna Case, with the Cansino Dancers, the Metropolitan Opera Chorus and the New York Phil.

Feature: "Don Juan" with John Barrymore, Mary Astor and Estelle Taylor, directed by Alan Crosland. Running time 109 minutes. Musical accompaniment with sound effects of clashing swords and bells.

Warners wished to impress the public with a spectacle that everybody would want to see, with "The greatest artists and the best orchestra in the country". Certainly, the first programme of shorts was remarkably 'highbrow', with five of the seven musical numbers being classical (and, of course, Anna Case was an opera singer). The premier was attended by many of the movie moguls and other impressarios; by other show business personalities such as Galli-Curci; and by most of the performers whose talents were displayed in the short films.

Will Hays gave a speech introducing Vitaphone and, of course, congratulating Warners on their enterprise (the text is given by Geduld, pp 123-4). At the end of the

speech, the figure on the screen stood silent for a moment. The audience burst into applause as if responding to a live performer. The illusion was completed as the image bowed, apparently acknowledging the applause. One observer was moved to remark, "No closer approach to resurrection has ever been made by science". Mordaunt Hall, the critic to the New York Times, was also greatly impressed: "It was the voice of Hays", he wrote, "and had any of his friends closed their eyes to the picture on the screen, they would immediately have recognised his voice. Every syllable was audible and clear". Other observers made similar comments. (Later, adverse comment may be derived from seeing a sound-on-film version where, apparently, synchronisation was not so good.)

Hall was also impressed with the performance of the overture, not only for the "clarity of the tonal colours and softer interludes", but also for the "thrilling volume of the full orchestra". Other witnesses were somewhat more guarded. E.W.Sargent, reviewing the show for *Moving Picture World*, gives an interesting technical review: "In the work of the Philharmonic orchestra, the string section came out as brilliantly as though the players were in the pit. The wood choir was a bit muffled and tubby, and when the heavy brasses came in there developed a curious covered effect, as though the instruments had too much tone to deliver. On the other hand, the tympani, of even deeper tone, came through clearly ... In brief, the Vitaphone seems to work best at opposite ends of the scale; the high notes and the low. The middle registers, whether instrumental or vocal, still lack clarity. The volume of tone seems to govern clearness to a considerable degree, for the solos were much better than the concerted numbers. However, the device gives a far greater audibility, a far more correct rendition of tonal values and at most points is free from the suggestion of the phonograph horn."

Seen today in a sound-on-film version, Geduld (p126) says that its static cinematography seems to outweigh the importance it once possessed as a masterly achievement in sound recording. "It is dullness incarnate and seems interminable." (This was a general complaint made at the time about the excessive length of the musical numbers and, generally speaking, the later shorts were shorter.)

Geduld reports that the films following the overture were no less static, but they had the merit of being shorter! One critic found the performance by Elman and Bonime "One of the most entrancing things, as interpreted by the Vitaphone, that we have listened to", and Hall commented on the excellent synchronisation between Elman's sound and his bow and fingers.

The Talley performance of 'Caro Nome' attracted more adverse criticism, on both visual and auditory grounds. However, it was noticed that her voice 'modulated' (changed in volume) as she moved back and forth - a defect in a gramophone record but a note of realism in a sound film. Some critics were concerned with apparent poor synchronisation, charitably ascribed by one observer to Talley's tones "formed in her throat before the lips have apparently been framed for these tones, as we, the audience, watch the young lady. The Vitaphone caught the tones as formed." However, Photoplay's critic was downright insulting: "The one frost of the evening was Marion Talley, the 'Kansas City canary' her voice was far from attractive. As for her face, the producers made the mistake of allowing the camera to come too close to her. Long shots - and good, long ones - were just invented for that girl." Variety's reporter also said that Talley "looked to be grimacing her way through." I shall have more to say on the hapless Miss Talley in the next instalment - meanwhile, suffice it to say that in 1926, the lady was quite pretty and pleasantly plump (there

is a picture of her taken at the time in 'Okay for Sound'), so the adverse criticism presumably arose from the way she moved her feature during singing. Talley made several more Vitaphone shorts.

The Smeck film provided a bit of light relief. "The numbers were jazzy, and the production wholly satisfying, the audience relishing the offering", wrote one critic. The favourable response played its part in determining the character of the next Vitaphone programme.

The next film, of Martinelli singing the Pagliacci aria, was widely considered to be the highlight of the show. Martinelli was, of course, a great tenor, and it appears that the Vitaphone system recorded his voice very favourably. Mordaunt Hall was ecstatic: "Even today (1928) there has been no better specimen of sound and shadow than the rendition by Martinelli ... It was so excellent, so real, that one felt that Martinelli would eventually burst through the screen, as if it were made of paper." The captain of the Talley picture cited above also says that Vitaphone was so convincing that incredulous first-nighters hid in the wings to catch Martinelli coming off stage!

The Zimbalist and Bauer film had a mixed reaction. Variety's reporter (already disillusioned with Talley) thought "they did not register well", though the New York Times man found "every note audible". This discrepancy may be due to a simple matter of where the critics were sitting; poor acoustics were to be a problem into the thirties, so it is hardly surprising if all was not right on the opening night.

Everyone agreed that Anna Case was a great success. The performers were ornately costumed against an elaborate hacienda set (shown on p 73 of 'Okay for Sound'). The Cansinos were the parents of Rita Hayworth.

The feature film 'Don Juan' starred John Barrymore as the Great Lover, Mary Astor as the heroine and Estelle Taylor as the villainess. The director was Alan Crosland. The film was completed as a silent and then the special musical accompaniment (and sound effects) were recorded as the film was projected. The picture has been shown several times on television, most recently in February 1984. It rattled along well, with plenty of the Great Profile and suave ham. Estelle Taylor was good as the villainess and young Mary Astor delightful as the model of virtuous innocence. The sound was quite good, with occasional 33½ rpm hisses. One can understand why Warner were only interested in musical accompaniment with Vitaphone at this stage.

The success of the first Vitaphone programme caused Warners to prepare a second theatre for sound, the Colony, also on Broadway. Here was premiered the second Vitaphone programme, on October 5 1926. Again, a series of shorts was followed by a feature. The shorts were rather more to popular taste this time:

1. The Spirit of 1918, played by the New York Phil.
2. 'The long, long Trail' and a medley of other songs, by Reinald Werrenrath.
3. Elsie Janis and a chorus from the 107th Cavalry.
4. Comic sketch 'Between the Acts at the Opera' by Eugene and Willie Howard.
5. Songs by the Four Aristocrats.
6. 'Al Jolson in a Plantation Act'.
7. Monologue and song by George Jessel.

The feature film was 'The Better 'Ole', directed by Alan Crosland, with Sidney Chaplin,

and again had musical accompaniment and some sound effects. Werrenrath was indeed an operatic baritone (recording exclusively for Victor), but here he sings popular songs, not arias. The Four Aristocrats were a jazz group. Elsie Janis sang her songs perched on an army lorry. The Howards' sketch was a talkie, a presage of what was to come. The dialogue was well-recorded and well received, and sound effects were used to develop the comedy. George Jessel and Al Jolson were professional rivals. Apparently, Jessel's short was not too popular, but the Jolson sketch was a great success, and was a factor leading to Jolson's, rather than Jessel's, starring in the 1927 breakthrough film 'The Jazz Singer' even though Jessel was the star in the 1926 Broadway show.

The third Vitaphone show returned to a highbrow tone, at yet a third Broadway theatre, the Selwyn, on February 3 1927. Of the six shorts, four were operatic (including two with Marion Talley!) and a fifth was a group of Southern melodies sung by an opera singer, Mary Lewis. Again, Crosland directed the feature, 'When a Man Loves', with John Barrymore, Dolores Costello, Warner Oland and Eugenie Besserer - the latter soon to make history in 'The Jazz Singer' when, as Jolson's mother, she engages in conversation with the singer; this fragment of dialogue marked the beginning of the true talking feature film. But 'When a Man Loves' had musical accompaniment only.

The operatic shorts were well received. The quartet from 'Rigoletto' with Talley, Jeanne Gordon, Gigli and de Luca was considered better than the offerings in the first programme "in artists and sound quality" (no close-ups of Talley?) and was frequently added to later programmes. Charles Hackett and Talley also sang solo arias which enjoyed almost as much acclaim.

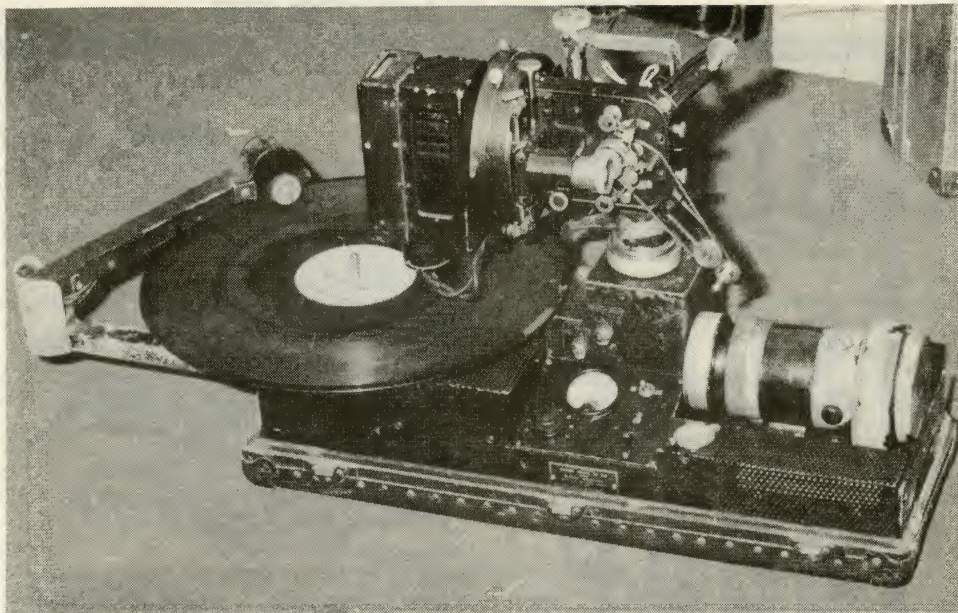
As time went on, more theatres were wired for sound and the films enjoyed a wider showing. Vitaphone premieres came thick and fast in 1927 (all in New York): March 19, April 3, 11, 16, 24 and so on. In March 1927, Variety magazine began reviewing the premieres - or rather, some of them. Between MARCH 1927 and October 1928 (after which the UCLA microfilm has a large gap), I counted reviews of sixty-four shorts. However, hundreds were made; Walker says that by October 1928 Warners had made over 400 shorts, so it seems that Variety reviewed not more than 25% of those produced after March 1927.

There is no doubt that, from the very start, the Vitaphone experiment was a success. At first there was the novelty of reasonable sound well synchronised. As the novelty waned, the sound and film quality were improved, keeping up the interest. Musical accompaniment for feature films became usual, before the general use of recorded speech towards the end of the decade.

Sound-on-disc was used simply because the quality was better than that of sound-on-film in 1926. Even Lee de Forest, the developer of sound-on-film, stated in 1926 "I can say without hesitancy that (the Vitaphone methods) represent the nearest approach to perfection of recording and reproducing voice and music which has ever been reached in the phonograph art. The effects which have been obtained in recording a large orchestra are truly magnificent ... To say that the audiences who attend Vitaphone programs are thrilled and electrified would be but a trite reiteration." Praise-indeed: perhaps, though, he realised that sound-on-film would triumph by 1930.

REFERENCES: Much of the material is taken from Geduld's 'The Birth of the Talkies' (1975), Walker's 'The Shattered Silents' (1978) and Variety magazine (microfilm at UCLA, California). Specific references are as follows:

1. Okay for Sound, ed. F. Thrasher, Duell Sloan and Pearce, NY 1946.
2. Mordaunt Hall, Trans. Soc. Motion Picture Engineers, 12 (35) 603-613 (1928)
3. The Warner Brothers Story, C. Hirschorn, Octopus 1979
4. Lee de Forest, Trans. Soc. Motion Picture Engineers 10 (27) 64-76 (1927) (speech of October 1926)



This sound-on-disc projector was espied recently in a sale of photographic equipment at Christie's South Kensington and photographed for HILLANDALE just before it was due to go under the hammer. It carried the nameplate of the Western Electric Co. Ltd., and the record on it was a product of the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd.

VITAPHONE SIDE NUMBERS

Just in case no-one else clears up Mr. Moss's little difficulty with the arrangement of the side numbers on Vitaphone film sound-track discs (Hillandale August), I shall offer an explanation of his two single sides:

As two turntables are used alternately, to allow continuous play-back, one turntable must play only odd-numbered sides and the other only even numbers. Therefore, sides 9 and 10 must be on different turntables - and must be so simultaneously.

In general, the couplings have to be 1/3, 5/7, 9/11 etc. for odd numbers and 2/4, 6/8, 10/12 etc. for even numbers - the distribution of any single sides can thus be seen to follow the sequence: odd only, odd and even, even only, neither, repeated over and over again as the total number of sides increases.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Adamson

St. Andrews, Fife.

SOAP,

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SOAP.



*Two years ago I used four soaps.
Since then I have used no other!*

BY KIND PERMISSION OF MESSRS. PEARS.

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Getting the Dirt Off

Dear Christopher,

Maidenhead, Berks

I have a feeling that Mr. Mike Brown (HILLANDALE 145) will receive much advice from members on his record cleaning and playing problems. There are probably several ways of cleaning shellac records, each method no doubt having its advocates, but this, for what it is worth, is the method I find satisfactory:

1. Make up a solution of detergent at room temperature. I prefer 'Stergene'; one cupful in a litre of water.
2. Place the record on a clean kitchen worktop and scrub it with the solution, using a shaving brush which has been retired from its original duty. Use a circular motion to follow the grooves.
3. Lift up the record carefully against the effect of atmospheric pressure on the wet disc (undue force or haste could crack the record) and rinse it under a moderate flow from the cold tap.
4. Place the record vertically in a plate rack to drain.
5. When it is dry, or nearly so, lay the record on clean newspaper and polish off with a clean linen cloth. This can be followed with a velvet cloth or cleaning pad, once again using a circular action.

That's all, but avoid using this procedure on any laminated discs (pre-EMI Columbias, for example) if they have been damaged in any part so as to expose the internal paper layer.

Turning to the choice of styli, the 0.0025-inch radius diamonds as available from Shure and others are fine for playing records dating from about 1939 onwards, but for the older electric recordings I have always found 0.0035-inch styli the best, and for some acoustic records even larger points fit the groove better.

Enough from me: Mr. Brown will readily find a way out of his problem among the regular advertisements in HILLANDALE NEWS.

Ken Loughland

Glasgow

Dear Christopher,

No doubt there are many solutions to Mike Brown's questions but here 'for the record' (excuse the pun) are mine.

To clean gritty records I use a soft brush with plenty of long, fine hairs (a good shoe brush serves the purpose) and a mild solution of soap flakes ('Lux' perhaps) dissolved in warm water. Taking care to avoid the label, I brush the grooves in a radial motion. This process usually disengages all particles without unnecessary abrasion to the record surface. The same brushing procedure is repeated, using cold water, to ensure that no soapy residue is left behind.

The disc can then be dried by using a towel or cloth to soak up water on the surface of the disc. When dry, the record will probably require a wipe with a record brush. Collectors would be well advised to use one of the dusters made by HMV, Columbia and many others for this purpose. Modern equivalents, designed in most cases for use on microgroove records, are not suitable as the plush fabric used in their manufacture does not penetrate the grooves of a 78 rpm shellac disc properly.

Mr. Brown's Shure cartridge will indeed be more sensitive to dirt in the grooves than a steel needle in a heavy soundbox. However, even when his records are clean, he will not get the best from them by using only the manufacturer's .0025" diamond tip. For pre-war pressings a larger tip radius is required to fit the groove properly (the steel needle had such a down force from the soundbox that it was ground into the groove shape after it had played over the first few revolutions of the record. This explains why many 78s are worn badly at the start but improve further on.)

To achieve the best results from 78s via modern equipment, I would wholeheartedly recommend Mr. Brown (and any other collectors who have not yet tried the service offered by Mr. Wyndham Hodgson's company) to contact Expert Pickups of Ashted, Surrey. Their address can be found regularly in the advertisement pages of this journal.

An alternative cleaning method to that outlined above can be found in certain specialist audio shops; the Keith Monks professional record cleaning machine. Results are excellent (on 78s or l.p.s) but over a large number of records, the cost becomes rather prohibitive.

John E. Cavanagh

Grove Park, London S.E.

Dear Christopher,

In the August HILLANDALE Mike Brown asked a very short question about the cleaning of records. May I offer a very long answer?

Everybody knows that records turn up bearing rich deposits of pumice powder, coal dust, sticky comestibles, and just plain dirt, but even a record which looks quite clean has a film of dirt on it. If it were made of glass instead of black shellac you would be able to see that it hasn't been cleaned for 30 to 40 years. So I always clean every 78 record coming into my house, whatever its apparent condition, to give it a fresh start in life. Such kindness pays: many records which arrive looking like unplayable wrecks emerge from the filth in mint condition, playing noiselessly on even the finest magnetic cartridge. Just occasionally I painstakingly remove years of muck only to find a crack from centre-hole to edge which had been invisible in the junk-shop. You can't win them

all.

Cleaning records is tedious drudgery, especially when you have just arrived home with a carload of exciting acquisitions which you want to play. Have patience: do the job properly. Take a small bowl of warm water, generously laced with washing-up detergent. Place the record on a turntable revolving at 78 or more and, using a 1" decorator's paintbrush, apply water very sparingly into the grooves. I have a heavy turntable driven by a strongish electric motor, and it has withstood this treatment for many years without complaint, probably because I use only a 1" paintbrush. I could get along more quickly if I applied wider strips of water with, say, a 2" brush or even a paperhanger's brush, but the extra drag would put a great strain on the motor, while a spring-driven turntable would simply stop turning.

Use of "water" and "electric" in such intimate juxtaposition will raise eyebrows, and quite right, too, so let me stress again the words "very sparingly". Wet the brush and press it out against the lip of the bowl until it is drip-free; then apply thin films of wetness to the spinning record in 1" strips, starting at the label and working outwards strip by strip, so that the outer edge gets the least moisture of all. If the outer edge gets too wet (a) water will seep underneath the record on to the turntable, which is messy; and (b) centrifugal force will fling water all over the adjacent furniture, which is messier still.

Having painted the water on to the revolving disc you now take it off again, together with the dirt. Reverse the direction of the brush and insert the bristles, point-first, gently into the oncoming grooves. As before, progress in 1" strips, one by one, outwards from the label edge. Let the record spin five or six times for each strip. Moisture will be forced up into the brush, which should be pressed out against the inside of the bowl before proceeding to the next strip.

All that remains is to mop up the water remaining on the record surface. Have ready one of those up-market soft toilet rolls. Tear off two sheets and fold them together; then fold them twice more into a wad, which should then measure some 1½" by the width of the roll (either 4" or 5" depending on how far up-market you went). With the turntable still spinning away, apply one long edge of the wad gently across the radius of the record to soak up the water from the grooves. Don't press down or you will slow up the turntable. When the edge of the wad is good and soaked, apply the other long edge. If this wad now simply looks wet, dry off the record completely with another. But if it not only looks wet but black, there is more dirt on the record, so repeat the whole process, applying the water, brushing out the grooves, and mopping up with the bum-paper. Only the most filthy records will need this second application. When all is done, turn the record over and start on the other side.

Keep an eye on the bowl and you will see dirt collecting in the bottom of the bowl, so change the water every ten sides or so, and wash out the brush under a tap.

When a record is coated with dust or grit you may be tempted to brush off the loose muck before beginning the washing process. Resist the temptation. All you will do is fill the air with clouds of dust. Most of the dust will stay on the record surface and act as a very efficient abrasive as you are rubbing it into the grooves. Another point: having washed grit and gravel off a particularly dirty record, don't then replace it in its nice original printed cardboard cover without remembering that some of the grit will still be nestling inside that. You will be back at square one unless you clean out the cover as well.

Occasionally I find a record which I have been seeking all my life, and it is always liberally splashed with gloss paint. I know of no way to remove oil-based paint from a record, and would be glad to hear of one. Once I found a dozen or so G.&T. discs in excellent condition except that the whole pile, covers and all, had obviously spent three-quarters of the century submerged in a tank of some glutinous greasy oily substance.

I wiped them as clean as I could, but no detergent or emulsifier, could I find which would remove the gunge. In desperation I put them on the turntable and applied methylated spirits with a brush. Methylated spirits attacks shellac and marks it, so I washed it off very quickly with water and dried off with the toilet-paper as usual. It worked. No harm came to the records; the oily sticky stuff was cleaned off, leaving the records with a shiny top-hat appearance which was so attractive I had to be restrained from applying grease and methylated spirits to all my other records.

Ted Cunningham

New South Wales

Dear Sir,

I thought your readers may be interested in a report of an auction held in Melbourne on September 1st 1985. It is the only auction I have attended which was devoted exclusively to phonographs, gramophones and records. I travelled 600 miles from Sidney to attend the sale, but I did not buy anything.

Among the more interesting items were the following, with the prices realised in Australian dollars:

Four Nightingale cylinder machines of the Puck type - \$170, \$280, \$120 and \$160.

Ediphone Utility shaver - \$70

Two Edison Amberola 30s - \$450 and \$400

HMV Junior Monarch - \$650

Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph C-19 with l.p. attachment - \$550

Edison Triumph E - \$1400

Beltona internal and external horn machine - \$1300

Edison Amberol shaving machine - \$130

Columbia Graphophone Grand (Type AG) - \$3250

HMV Model 203 Re-entrant with electric motor - \$600

Pathe disc machine with interchangeable soundboxes - \$1600

Edison School Phonograph Model A (cylinder storage drawers missing) - \$6000

Three lots each of Berliner records - \$75, \$80, \$80

Three Caruso G.& T.s - \$80

Two lots of Edison l.p. discs (same 4 items in each) - \$160 and \$140

Three Fonotipia 10½-inch discs - \$110

Two lots of G. & T. operatic discs - \$50 and \$40
Two lots of four 7-inch International Zonophone discs - \$80 and \$130
Three Melba label discs offered separately - \$45, \$45 and \$40
Four Pathe 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch discs - \$50
Two Pathe 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch discs - \$100
Three Pathe 20-inch discs offered separately - \$300, \$300 and \$360
Six World Records (Pemberton Billing) - \$260
Five Edison Bell Concert cylinders - \$200 - \$300
One Columbia Grand cylinder - \$400
Three lots of Edison brown wax cylinders - \$40, \$35 and \$35.

A number of the items were purchased by the recently-established National Film and Sound Archive.

Barry Badham
(Vice-President, Phonograph Society of N.S.W.)

Bonn

Dear Christopher Proudfoot,

I am currently engaged in research on Gramophone Needles and Needle Tins with the intention of publishing a book. In spite of diligent research I have been unable to trace anything in writing on the subject.

There is ample literature covering the history of recorded sound, discs, reproducers, gramophones etc. But apparently there is nothing regarding the development of needles - neither in the form of contemporary reports nor in the form of latter-day research. This is especially true for the early period up to about 1905, when various patents were applied for and published in papers such as *Phonographische Zeitschrift* or *Die Sprechmaschine*.

Have I overlooked any sources? Like: what sort of needles were used by Berliner himself or his partners, successors and competitors? Did they experiment with different materials, shapes, tips? And with what results? Who made the very early needles?

I would be very glad if you could pass this query on to members of the Society.

Rainer G. Lotz



DRURY LANE.

MR. DAN LENO.

Another feature of the Edison Bell Fin-de-Siecle catalogue was this portrait of Dan Leno with a phonograph horn mysteriously hanging out of the sky.

COMPUTER CATALOGUING

Computers seem to be the answer to most things nowadays, be it keeping children quiet on rainy weekends, or being responsible for Man landing on the moon. Bearing in mind the complexities and exactitudes of the latter, not to mention some of the arcade games, one could be forgiven for thinking that it could be easy to establish a cheap and cheerful computer system capable of looking after a modest record collection. However, anything to do with computers is rarely as simple and easy as first envisaged.

Most people have heard stories of people buying small home computers to look after the contents of their freezer, and their home accounts, but I often wonder how many of these individuals run such programs after the first few months when the novelty has worn off. People soon find that there are some pretty restricting factors that get in the way. This article sets out to explain some of the pitfalls people might wish to contemplate before starting off with a home computer devoted to the administration of a record collection.

We had better start off with a few definitions. There is the computer itself, occasionally known as the CPU (Central Processing Unit). Electrically, this is far and away the most complex part of any home computer, but it is progressively getting the cheapest. Next we have a Screen, or Monitor (or ordinary television for many home computers). This is the basic setup required for any computing, but with this arrangement, there is nowhere to store any significant amount of data. That, plus the fact that any data keyed into the computer is lost when the power is switched off, would make this arrangement only suitable for the odd calculation, and certainly make it completely useless for any cataloguing.

For the computer to be of any practical use, there must be some means of storing significant amounts of data in a permanent fashion. Two such media are found on home computers. One is the cassette tape (usually identical to the modern compact cassette, but containing high quality tape). The other is known as a diskette. This is a thin circular piece of plastic, varying in size between a Mimosa and a Woolworths Victory, protected by a plastic sleeve. Data is stored on the diskette's magnetic surface, and is very susceptible to dust or other damage such as coffee or sticky buns - hence the outer protective sleeve. The data on the cassettes can be read into a home computer by playing them on any reasonable quality cassette player; diskettes need a proper disc drive.

So much for definitions. Let us think about a typical branch of W.H.Smith, who these days seem to stock a whole mountain of home computers, some from as little as £30. This might well be within budget. So, what's the catch?

A small amount of arithmetic is required at this stage. Let us assume that in our computerised filing system we want to store Artists' names and the Song Titles (forgetting for the moment Labels, Catalogue and Matrix numbers). A typical Artist name might have around 20 characters; a Title might have around 40. Assuming that we are dealing with 10-inch 78s, and that the same artist appears on both sides of the record, we are talking about $20 + 40 + 40$ characters, that is 100 per record. The size of home computers is measured in 'K': K means approximately 1000 characters, so that a '32K' machine can store 32000 characters. However, not all of these are free for you to use. Up to 10000 must be reserved for the machine's internal programs. If 22000 are free, we can store the details of 220 records - and that isn't very many. We have excluded

the Label and other such information, and have not entered any filing references. This could easily reduce the capacity of the machine to 150 records.

This means that we must store the data on the cassettes or diskettes mentioned above. Cassettes have the advantage of being fairly cheap, but a typical home computer can take a considerable time to read the information stored on them. If any changes are made to the data, the entire tape has to be re-created (that is, the contents of the computer's memory with the revised data has to be copied back to the cassette). It is therefore preferable to use diskettes.

This is where we hit on the next problem. A diskette itself might cost in the region of £3, but we have to purchase one of those special disc drives before we can use it - and at the moment, one of these can cost around £300. Remembering the earlier comments about sticky buns, ideally there should be some means of copying these diskettes so that the copies can be put in a safe place. This requires two disc drives, so we are up to £600. A respectable CPU with a decent keyboard will cost £300-£400, and we haven't yet considered a printer, which in my opinion is essential. (It's not very easy to browse through a record collection when only a small number of records can be displayed on the screen, particularly at a record fair!) So we need a printer - £250 at least. Great! We've now spent over £1000, well over the top of that machine we saw for £30.

£1000 would buy an awful lot of records.....

We haven't finished yet. Computers sit and do absolutely nothing unless someone writes a program for them. There have been one or two programs published which could be used to file our records, but a fair level of computer expertise is required - there seem to be no off-the-shelf products at a reasonable price, that could be worked by a 'beginner'. Are there solutions to these problems? Not yet. Home computers are getting cheaper, but it will be some time yet before one capable of dealing with reasonable volumes of data is available at a reasonable price. My solution has been to use a machine available at my place of work, but if you plan on doing this, YOU MUST GET FORMAL PERMISSION FIRST.

The programs run on an Apple II machine, with two disc drives and a printer. If anyone has access to such a machine, and is interested in further details, they are welcome to a copy of the programs, and should write to me c/o Hillandale News. If anyone has managed to get any other type of computer working to their advantage, I would also be interested to hear from them.

M.J.Lambert.

Reviews

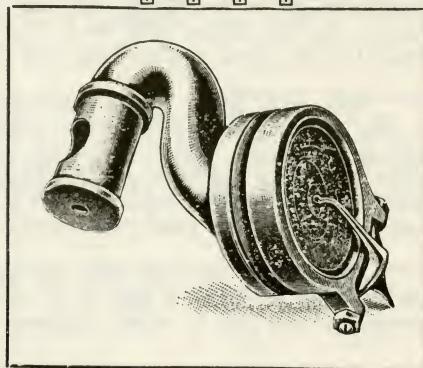
COLUMBIA 10-INCH RECORDS 1904 - 1930, by Frank Andrews, C.L.P.G.S.

As I was returning home from the Annual General Meeting and Phonofair at Oldbury I had occasion to change trains at Birmingham New Street, involving a wait of some fifteen minutes. Pacing the platform for exercise, I noticed a group of some fifty train



The above illustrates a
 "Gramophone & Typewriter"
 Machine operating
 "PATHE" DISC Records
 by means of

A "PATHE"
 . . DISC . .
 SOUNDBOX,
 PRICE 7s. 6d.



An Interesting Calculation :

| | | | | s. | d. |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|----|-------------|
| No. 84006. | "Gli Ugonotti." | Sung by Caruso. | Pathe Disc | - | 3 0 |
| .. 60045. | "Here's to the Maiden." | .. Ben. Davies. | " | - | 3 0 |
| .. 50114. | "In Sweet September" | .. Madam Kirkby Lunn. | " | - | 3 0 |
| One Pathe Disc Sound Box for adaptation to "Gramophone" Machines. | | | | | 7 6 |
| Total Cost | | | | | <u>16 6</u> |

PATHÉ FRÈRES LONDON,

14, 16 & 18, Lamb's Conduit Street, Holborn, W.C.

Retail Reception Salon : 64, Regent Street, W.

Cinematograph Branch : 31-33, Charing Cross Road, W.C.

spotters, men and boys, busily filling their pocketbooks with the individual numbers of the diesel and electric locomotives that passed through the station. This, of course, is a regular sight at New Street and other major stations, and although the mere collecting of numbers seems a pointless exercise for the young British male, it can, sometimes, lead to a serious interest in engineering or in the operation of public transport.

Later, on my train and heading for Reading, I mused on the fact that we record enthusiasts can be every bit as involved with numbers as those with other hobbies. A serious study of our subject requires reference to catalogue and matrix numbers, and every new listing that appears is of considerable practical value - so long as it is accurate.

The arrival on the scene of the new book by Frank Andrews is a most welcome event. Sensibly and attractively produced in A4 format, it consists of 306 pages reproduced from clearly typewritten originals. It lists all the double-sided ten-inch Columbia records in the general British catalogue - in other words the dark blue label series and its forerunners - from the first issues of the Columbia Phonograph Company, General right through to No. 5740, the last of the dark blues of the Columbia Graphophone Co. before the DB series took over, and it deals with the intermediate labels of Columbia Double Face, Rena Double Face and Columbia-Rena on the way.

The main pages list the issues in numerical order with the months of release, and I was pleased to see that the dates of electrical re-recording during the 'R'-suffixed period are given. Also of interest is a listing of the 'E' and 'F' prefixed issues derived from American matrices and featuring songs and sacred music in Hebrew and Yiddish, as well as instrumental items by Jewish musicians. The Bubble Books are covered as well, and there are some good monochrome reproductions of a selection of label styles.

The author has been able to show a large percentage of matrix numbers, and where he has had to leave a gap, it is to be hoped that anyone able to supply the needed information will pass it to Mr. Andrews.

A comprehensive, alphabetical index of artists is provided at the end of the book, and this section alone is a good armchair read, my cup of tea having turned quite cold while I consulted the list of pseudonyms for the Denza Dance Band! Interesting, too, to look up names at random: Billy Merson, Thorpe Bates, Vivian Foster - yes, I think so. Didn't Layton and Johnstone make a lot of records, and doesn't one still find them everywhere? No Beecham, though: only the light blue label was good enough for him, which leads me to mention that the 'D'-prefixed light blues are not included, having been dealt with in another publication.

I found few errors. Terance or Terence Casey? The former is, I believe, correct, but the book offers a choice. And surely the first words of the Welsh national anthem are "(Mae) hen wlad fy nhadau" and not those shown against record 2153. Oh, yes: one of the alphabetical index pages is reversed in the binding so that 'Porter, Steve' comes before 'Payne, Jack', but these are trifling matters.

To sum up, this listing is a first class reference document which should be on every record enthusiast's bookshelf. Just in time for Christmas, too. £8.00 nett or £9.80 including postage, from the Hillandale Booklist.

K.W.L.

September 1985

THE GRENADIER GUARDS BAND, Conducted by Captain George Miller

(Band International Series - No.2 IMMS 102)

Obtainable from V.Elstow, The International Military Music Society, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (£5.95p. post paid)

It is not often that a reviewer has the task of commenting on recordings by an ensemble some 300 years of age. This l.p. of the Band of H.M. Grenadier Guards is a selection of their Columbia recordings, taken between 1926 and 1932 and transcribed by the International Military Music Society.

A mixture of eighteen 10 and 12-inch sides, all under the conductorship of Captain George Miller, provides a British and continental programme with one American march. The sleeve gives the titles with composers, soloists where applicable, matrix numbers and a date, presumably the year of issue. Take numbers are not given as Columbia rarely showed them on the finished discs. The distinguishing "W" or "C" emblem for Western Electric or Blumlein recording processes has not been indicated; the 1926 to 1931 recordings were Western Electric.

There are photographs of three conductors of the Band involved in recordings from the earliest days of the industry, Lt. Dan Godfrey, Capt. Albert Williams and Capt. George Miller. Beneath these appears a potted history of the founding of the Band and short biographies of the conductors. Then each of the items transcribed is dealt with in a concise but informative manner, for which an extra fourth column is needed. Our own President is one of the authors.

The items selected are a mixture of the more familiar with titles which were little known by this reviewer. Of particular interest is a composition by George Miller, the father of the conductor.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| SIDE A Fighting Strength (H.Jordan) | SIDE B The Middy March (Alford) |
| Zampa Overture (Herold) | Songs of Scotland (arr. Duthoit) |
| Softly Awakes my Heart (Saint-Saens) | Rubinstein March (T.Bidgood) |
| Hop Scotch, Schottische (Rose) | La Vilanelle (Dell'Acqua) |
| Second to None march (J.O-Hume) | Galatea, Grand March (G.Miller) |
| Acclamations Valse (Waldteufel) | Nautical Moments (arr. Winter Duthoit) |
| Stars and Stripes for Ever (Sousa) | |

Using my two Quad amplifiers (220s), Leak Sandwich speakers and a Shure cartridge with an Expert Pickups diamond stylus I find these transfers excellent, with a much better response than I would expect to have from good original 78s. Lloyd Stickells, the engineer has transcribed extremely well, with little or no filtering. With Columbia's "silent surface" to work from, background noise is negligible, especially if one is used to the normal tracking sound of 78 r.p.m. The playing of the band is first class, as one would expect from the Grenadiers. In particular the tone of the woodwinds comes through quite clearly and with a natural timbre. The selection is perhaps a little too weighted towards marches but no second rate material has been used to fill out the programme. It is thoroughly recommended as a listenable and enjoyable musical offering.

Frank Andrews.

25

To commemorate our first quarter of a century, we reproduce here three articles from earlier issues of THE HILLANDALE NEWS (one for each decade).

December 1967:

HOW I FOUND MY BETTINI CYLINDERS

by Peter Betz

The discovery of these rare records was a stroke of fate, if ever one occurred. I first saw them in the dark, Victorian front parlour of a gentleman who wishes to remain anonymous. It was in December of 1963 and I had driven home from the University of Vermont in Burlington to Amsterdam, New York, and decided to visit Mr. X to see his latest 'wares'. There they were, two rectangular cardboard boxes with the usual spindles, exactly the same type as can be seen in the well known photo of Bettini in his studio. That fact alone should have caused me to think, but it did not. There were eighteen brown wax cylinders per box, all, from the physical viewpoint, in excellent condition.

Did I investigate them? Did I jump for joy and hurriedly pay a tremendous price? I did not. I passed them off, as did Mr. X, as someone's old home recordings, even though with a few record slips obvious, we should have known better. The only interesting fact about them was the presence of some very short, very dark brown cylinders in one box.

In short, I left them there, in the front parlour so often visited by collectors from all over the state and even farther away. For this, if for no other reason, I say it was fate that I should finally own them after all, for it was a good three weeks later when I returned, on Christmas vacation and, still unknowing, with a shrug of the shoulders, decided to take them, even if it transpired that they were worthless. The only reason I took them was the presence of the odd, short cylinders.

But the story is not over. In the early evening dusk I turned my ancient Ford, veteran of many such excursions, down the valley towards home. It was snowing slightly and I thought, as I do now, that there is nothing so psychologically painful as the necessary waiting period between buying and playing new cylinders, particularly when you have no idea what you have.

Yet when I arrived, I set them aside for the supper table. My mother was curious as to what new items she would probably have to dust around and started to investigate. She held up a faded slip to the light. I asked her "What does it say?"

"It says 'G.Bettini'", she replied, and we all leaped out of our chairs.

Dessert was postponed as my trusty Fireside was brought down to play the collection, thirteen of which, later authenticated by Mr. Walter Welch of Syracuse, were, in truth, Bettini cylinders. My Bettinis have been listed in Mr. Moran's encyclopaedic coverage of Bettini material in THE RECORD COLLECTOR, Vol. XVI, 7/8, Sept. 1965, coded as Collection 10. As some inaccuracies, not all Mr. Moran's fault, crept in here and there, I'll take the opportunity to list and describe the Bettini cylinders here.

1. *The Favorite - Concert Fantasia* by Frank Martin (cornet). This is a very clear, well-executed and difficult cornet solo with piano accompaniment.
2. *Mazurka - Obertass* by Dora Valesca Baker (violin). Another good instrumental piece, some high tones being lost perhaps through frequent playing. Piano acc.
3. *Nocturne (Chopin)* by Joseph Pizzarello (piano). The piano on Bettini cylinders does not record well, rumbling greatly. This is no exception, but the pianist's execution is that of an experienced artist with a feeling for the piece.
4. *Selection from La Sonnambula* by Gustave d'Aquin (flute). This is a good solo with nothing special to be said for it, other than it happens to be a Bettini. With piano.
5. *Sweetest Story Ever Told* by Mme. Strakosch. Clearly some superiority in volume and fulness in tone which Bettini advertised his female vocals as being. The vocalist, however, is not outstanding. Piano acc.
6. *Somebody Has My Heart* by Mme. Strakosch. Comments as above.
7. *My Coal Black Lady* by Lizzie B. Raymond. The artist has a loud, expressive voice and obviously knew how to put over a song of this type. Piano acc.
8. *All Coons Look Alike to Me* by Lizzie B. Raymond. Comments as for above. The pianist occasionally hits wrong notes, as is not unusual, apparently, as it occurs on occasion on other cylinders.
9. *I Want them Presents Back* by Lady X. Mr. Moran suggested that possibly, because each artist had recorded almost all the same songs, Lady X was Miss Raymond. Let me put that suggestion to rest, for Lady X is a soprano of light, airy voice, while Miss Raymond is a loud, coon-shouting-type contralto. This is a bland, unexpressive recording which nevertheless shows what the Bettini process could do with a light, frail voice.
10. *The Harmless Little Girl* by Lady X. This is an excellent recording, the voice expressive and exactly opposite from the preceeding one. The song would be humorous and successful even today.
11. *Barber of Seville: 1st Act, Duet* by Del Papa and De Bassini. Neither artist is considered first rate, but their voices blend well together and suggest that they had no small amount of experience singing together. De Bassini has much vocal expression while Del Papa hangs on successfully to the end.
12. *Aida - A Terra Addio (4th Act Duet)* by Chalia and Del Papa. Again Del Papa tries, Chalia is superb. The accompanist makes an occasional blunder but adds much to the mood of the performance on the whole. While it has been played some of Chalia's highs are inevitably still distinct, and the cylinder is a testimony to the successful results Bettini produced with the soprano voice.
13. *Parody on "If I Should Die Tonight" (Ben King) and another unidentified poem* by Henry E. Dixey. Piano background. This is the most interesting of the lot and has not been tied down to any catalogue. Dixey announces the first selection as "Christianity, by our Dixey". Between selections Dixey says "Dixey as Irving. No. Stop. I want to talk". When the stylus again cuts into the wax, Bettini announces "Dixey as himself", whereupon Dixey launches into a poem, heretofore untraced, titled 'King Jones'. This recording illustrates the Bettini characteristic of poor enunciation, with words often indistinct. We cannot but look to the process for the fault, for certainly the phrasing and execution of an experienced actor like Dixey cannot be called to question.

Perhaps a summary as to the nature and quality of the Bettini recording process, as observed from the records themselves, is in order. Steven Fassett, once a writer for Hobbies Magazine, mentioned hearing some in the late 1940s, said that it was a considerable disappointment. Perhaps this would be true for anyone who, hearing something which has been built up over a period of time, finally confronts it, and discovers it is not as glorious as had been imagined.

Compared with contemporary recordings, Bettini cylinders, when new, undoubtedly furnished a volume and fullness of tone vastly superior to the other products. These factors are still audible, when compared with common brown wax cylinders, but not the moulded variety. The only drawbacks were the poor quality of enunciation, undoubtedly accentuated by record wear, and the verve-rumble of the piano, which must have been present even when the cylinders were new. One may wonder if, when played with a Bettini spider reproducer, these negative factors may have, for some acoustical reasons, been a good deal eliminated. It is entirely possible, and until Bettini cylinders are again heard with a genuine Bettini reproducer, anything said about their acoustic qualities must be considered tentative.

Editor's note (1985): It seems not unlikely, eighteen years on, that someone somewhere has now tried playing Bettini cylinders on a machine with a Bettini reproducer. (The latter is nothing like as rare a piece of equipment as Mr. Betz's comments might seem to imply). Perhaps Members would like to comment.

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August 1972:

RESTORING A PATHE GAULOIS

by Mike Field

When I acquired the Pathe 'Gaulois' phonograph it was in a very sorry state. The entire left hand casting which supports the mandrel rod and drive gearing was broken away from the case. The mandrel, reproducer support arm, support arm bearing rods, stop/start mechanism and governor springs and weights were all missing. The feedscrew, feedscrew gear and intermediate gear were the wrong type and the paintwork was rusty and chipped.

Still, it was a phonograph and an unusual one at that. It bears a marked resemblance to the Edison 'Gem' and since it was marketed after the key-wind model, perhaps Pathe borrowed a few ideas! It offered a mute challenge to my restorative instincts, but it was obvious that I needed a lot of help and information, which I obtained from Society members.

Accordingly I talked to Mr. V.K.Chew, Keeper of the Department of Physics at the Science Museum in London, Society Member and author of the book 'Talking Machines'. While he felt sure he had seen some reference to the 'Gaulois' in a French publication circa 1900, a search through his extensive records was unsuccessful. He therefore suggested that I contact Monsieur E.Pecourt in Paris, who has a comprehensive collection; if he didn't have a machine or some reference to it, then it didn't exist.

M.Pecourt's reply came almost by return of post and apart from the invaluable details in his letter, he enclosed (very generously) an original advertisement (See Page 184) from his own collection for me to keep. I was now a great deal further forward,

but in some aspects I was still in the dark. Examination of the advertisement shows a tantalising glimpse of a curiously shaped reproducer arm and an even stranger handle at the rear of the machine.

The handle presumably was used to engage the drive to the reproducer arm, but how exactly did it operate?

What I needed was an engineering drawing or better still a machine to examine. The breakthrough informationwise, as our transatlantic friends would have us say, came when reading the New Zealand Society's magazine "The Phonograph Record". In this particular issue, there was a report of a meeting at which Wally Colledge demonstrated various machines. One of the machines sounded like the Pathe Gaulois. Wally Colledge has an extensive collection and is a well-known figure in phonographic circles (or perhaps cylinders). I was a little diffident about asking him for detailed information, but his response was immediate. Not only did he provide detailed sketches of the mysterious machines, but he also asked a very pertinent question....."Why look to New Zealand for your information when there is an identical machine within 100 miles of your home?"

Apparently, Bob Dukes, one of the Society's Midland members, and Wally have corresponded for years and Bob was the proud possessor of a 'Gaulois'. It seemed ironic that I should have gone to the opposite side of the world to learn of a machine practically on my doorstep! Bob, when I called on him, could not have been more helpful and suggested that I take the machine away for detailed examination. Moreover I could use the reproducer arm as a pattern to get another cast.

With a machine to examine, the mystery of the handle at the rear was solved. The handle is fixed to a shaft which is attached to, and rotates in, the back of the reproducer arm. On the shaft a cam is fixed which bears on the underside of a rod supported between the two cast arms of the case itself. Rotating the handle causes the cam to exert pressure on the rod, thus forcing the back of the reproducer arm downwards. This causes the nut to disengage from the feedscrew and the reproducer to lift off the cylinder. All very complicated, and not half as effective as the simple method employed on the Edison 'Gem'. But thereby hangs another tale - perhaps the patent war extended to France!

Having acquired all the necessary information, the task of restoration could now begin. First the case: with the aid of a specially made clamp and jig, the broken end was secured in place, prior to welding. It was essential to ensure that alignment was exact, otherwise the surface of the cylinder would not be parallel to the reproducer support bar. Once the alignment was satisfactory, the assembly was welded locally. Great care is necessary when welding cast iron boxes, particularly when old, to prevent distortion and cracking. However, this time all was well.

With the aid of a suitable filler and plenty of work with a grindstone and files the original shape and surface finish was restored. The paintwork was in poor condition, but in any event, application of a welding torch is not likely to improve paintwork. Therefore the trade mark and name transfers were carefully masked and after rubbing down, the case was resprayed with an aerosol paint. A bit of retouching of the transfers, re-lining in gold paint, followed by a coat of polyurethane varnish, transformed a rusty old object into an 'as new' case.

Meanwhile, the reproducer arm taken from Bob Duke's machine had been prepared as a sandcasting pattern by removing all attached pieces such as the drive nut and spring,

and filling all holes with a putty-like substance. Where the surface was machined, additional packing was added to allow sufficient metal for subsequent machining. The arm was then cast in bronze - I had expected brass - but the foundry had some difficulty with it. Although very difficult to hold in the lathe because of its shape, all machining was eventually completed satisfactorily. Using successively finer grades of emery paper, the entire surface was given a high polish.

The lifting cam, which once seemed so obscure, presented little problem on the lathe; it was made in three parts and then hard soldered together. Similarly, manufacture of the reproducer support tube (clamped in the reproducer support arm and carrying the reproducer on one side and the horn on the other), the feed nut and screw, and the stop/start mechanism gave little technical trouble.

I was dubious about manufacturing a mandrel which might have proved quite difficult. The pressing which constituted the drive pulley and large end of the mandrel and which was fitted with its drive gear, was with the machine when I received it. The actual body of the mandrel on which the cylinder fits was missing. However I found that a spare Edison 'Standard' mandrel fitted on to the existing end exactly. Problem solved! The required intermediate and feedscrew gears were cut on a lathe using a home-made dividing plate and an appropriate cutter.

Finally all new parts were nickel-plated, the motor itself cleaned and oiled and the whole thing re-assembled. The spring was wound up and - moment of truth - the start lever was pushed. It played perfectly. The result is a very interesting addition to the collection. Although I can hardly claim that it is an original 'Gaulois' (anyone want to buy a Heinz phonograph) it looks original. A machine almost certainly destined for the scrap heap has been saved to play again, but restoration would not have been possible without the generous help of Society members. That people of all nationalities should go out of their way to help a virtual stranger linked only by a hobby is, to me, what belonging to the Society is all about. Long may it prosper.

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June 1980:

AN EVENING WITH ERNEST LOUGH

by John McKeown

On Tuesday, 18th March, 1980, Mr. Ernest Lough, the famous Temple Church Choir-boy (now a grandfather) gave a talk to the Society about his recording experiences and life as a choirboy.

Mr. Lough is a very entertaining speaker and gave us much information on the background to his famous recording of "Hear My Prayer" on HMV C.1329.

He joined the Temple Church Choir at the age of twelve, though this was considered late for acceptance. He attended the City of London School as a day pupil and he told us of his daily life at that time. Lessons until 3.30 in the afternoon and then choir practice until 6.30 or 7 o'clock. Home to Forest Gate, which he reached about 8 in the evening and then home-work. In addition, of course, there were two full services at the Church on Sundays and an oratorio every third Sunday.

The Temple Church was the private church of the judges and magistrates of the Temple, and in 1927 one of them, Lord Chief Justice Banks, was impressed by the Choir's rendering of Mendelssohn's anthem "Hear My Prayer". He thought it might be a good idea to have it recorded. The Gramophone Company were approached and it was agreed that they should do it at the Temple using their new outside recording van. The first attempt was a fiasco, but on another visit a successful recording was secured and the record was eventually issued with the success of which we all know. Due to the heavy demand the masters soon wore out and a second session was held about six months later.

Master Ernest Lough, as he then was, soon became world famous. People began to flock to the Temple Church and it became necessary to control the flow by issuing tickets for the services. Mr. Lough read out some very amusing letters which he received at the time from people asking for tickets. A little later a report got out that he had died suddenly after singing the last notes of "Hear My Prayer". One day when he and his fellow choristers were playing football outside the practice room a lady came up and asked him where she should contribute to the Ernest Lough Memorial Fund! On another occasion he was watching the operation of an automatic gramophone at Selfridges. It was playing one of his records and he overheard someone remark on the tragic death of the young singer. As late as 1967 someone wrote from abroad with an offer to pay for the upkeep of Ernest Lough's grave!

Mr. Lough recalled how "Hear Ye, Israel" (from Mendelssohn's 'Elijah') was recorded one Saturday afternoon to use up some spare waxes. He had never sung it before, but Dr. Thalben Ball taught him the piece there and then. He considers it his best solo record. "I Know that My Redeemer Liveth" was recorded in answer to requests and was done at a single session. Mr. Lough referred to it as his 'last fling' as a boy soprano, his voice being about to break at that time.

With characteristic modesty Mr. Lough believes that his success was due to a combination of circumstances, not least of which was the introduction of electrical recording. For the first time, the public could hear on record the 'angelic' sound of a boy's voice in church. He pointed out that all the Temple Church boys sounded the same, as they were all trained in the same way, and he played a record by Dennis Barthel to illustrate the point. He also paid tribute to Dr. George Thalben Ball, whom he considered the greatest of living organists.

Mr. Lough retired from the Temple Church Choir some years ago, but occasionally sings with them as a deputy.

He told us that contrary to belief he never made much money from his records. There was some talk at first of issuing "Hear My Prayer" on red label, but as we all know it came out on plum. The record was retailed at 4/6d., from which the Temple got a small percentage. Of the latter, Mr. Lough got about 25%. The money was invested until he was 21 years of age. When that day came it just about gave him enough on which to get married.

After his talk Mr. Lough spent about half an hour answering questions and autographing records with the utmost courtesy and good humour.

All we record collectors must have turned over hundreds of copies of "Hear My Prayer" and I suppose had come to look on it as having some sort of nuisance value. I am sure that all who attended the meeting on March 18th will in future treat these records with new respect, remembering the charming and delightful personality of the man who made them when a boy.



It beats me how they've kept on finding new things to say about playing a record on a machine